

Yokosuka Computer Club
March/April 1984

News, Gossip, and Innuendo from the
Western Pacific

Local Gossip

NEXT MEETING: April 11 (Wed) at 1800 (NOTE TIME), top floor of Barracks "C." Scheduled activities include nomination and ELECTION of new officers. Additionally, there will be discussion of a possible club-sponsored visit to the Micro Computer Show '84 (May 23-26 at Ryutsu Center).

LAST MEETING: It appeared as if almost everyone on base went to the Nagoya Fertility Festival in March. Making matters worse, Yokosuka suffered another "once in a century" snow storm the evening of the meeting. In spite of this, a fair crowd came by -- but elections were postponed since few in the crowd were members. Chuck Underwood (if I got the name wrong please forgive me -- and correct me) demonstrated his Heathkit H-100 computer. As the H-100 is the kit version of the Zenith Z-100, his presentation attracted considerable attention. He demonstrated the superb graphics, outlined the H-100 memory map (over 700K free for programs), and explained the interrupt structure of the H-100 and how it could be used to run more than one program at once. Mr. Underwood carried the machine (and it isn't small) with him on the train down from Yokohama, an act above and beyond the call of duty. J.R. Lee briefly demonstrated the Perfect series of software on his Apple. All Perfect programs (Perfect Writer, Perfect Calc, etc.) use the same command keys and same file structure, making passing information between programs very easy. Lawrence Charters showed some samples of colored diskettes, and explained how they could be used to distinguish disks for different machines, or disks containing restricted or classified information. The meeting closed with a lively discussion of the purpose and direction of the club. Why don't more people participate? How can we increase membership? Should programs be planned for novices, or advanced users, or both? Should the club set up separate special interest groups for CP/M, Apple, Atari, etc. owners? Should the club assist commands in selecting software and equipment and educating users? What should the club do to advertise? While no firm conclusions were reached, it was generally felt the two top priorities should be recruiting new members and getting more people to participate. Accordingly, come to the next meeting ready to DO something.

TANDY/RADIO SHACK STUFF: The Tandy Computer Center (4-9-13 Ginza, Tokyo) has finally received a Model 2000 machine, and the color graphics are beyond

belief. The store also expects to get dual-disk drive units for Model 100 computers "real soon now."

DEAD MAC FOUND: While wandering around Tokyo's Ginza a Macintosh was discovered at Omron Micon Systems (1-8-21 Ginza). Moving the mouse and pressing buttons resulted in a clever screen display of a bomb and a message saying the program had crashed. Unfortunately, this was the only thing the Mac would do and, since the Mac will not allow a disk to be removed until a program is properly exited, nothing could be done. The salesman confessed the machine had come with only one disk -- and it had never been backed up. He claimed "better Macs" would be available the first of April. With this in mind we announce --

REVISED CLUB CONTEST: If you are the first to bring a working Macintosh to a computer club meeting the Yokosuka Computer Club will give you a free subscription to its outstanding, informative, well written, and modest newsletter.

Foreign News

ZENITH CONTRACT: An article in the January Small Systems World details how the Z-100 was selected as the "standard micro" for the Navy and Air Force. They wanted a 1) single-user, stand alone machine, with 2) the ability to run 8-bit CP/M software, 3) optional support for 16-bit software, 4) at least 64K of memory, 5) floppy disk storage, 6) communications ports, 7) both a visual display and a keyboard, 8) ability to add peripheral equipment, and 9) "functional" software packages (none of them than non-functional ones, by gosh). Proposals offered (often by someone other than the manufacturer) included machines from IBM, Texas Instruments, NCR, Zenith, NorthStar, C3, Wang, DEC, Burroughs, Jonas, Cromemco, and several others. Zenith, as it turns out, did not win the original contract; the original selection was found, after testing, to be unsuitable, and only then was Zenith awarded the contract.

ZENITH CONTRACT EXTENDED: Both the Air Force and Navy have been so pleased with Zenith equipment and contract conditions that the contract has been boosted to cover at least \$50 million in purchases.

ZENITH NETWORK: ZLAN, a low cost local area network, has been announced for linking over 200 Zenith Z-100 machines together. All machines are linked in a tree structure to a standard Winchester disk-based Z-100 acting as a file server.

HEATH/ZENITH MAGAZINE: If you have, or are interested in getting, a Z-100, you might subscribe to Sextant. The latest issue has some very good articles on the H/Z-100 (including one on military users), plus some ads for programs and equipment designed for these machines. (One utility advertised "retokenizes" IBM PC BASIC programs for use on the Z-100.) Six issues (one year) cost \$14.97. Write: Buss/Sextant, 716 E Street SE, Washington, DC 20003.

AT&T COMPUTERS: Western Electric's powerful "Bellmac" 32-bit processor is at the heart of several new computers being sold by AT&T. The 3B series of supermicros and minis range in price (for basic hardware) from \$10,000-340,000. All are UNIX-based multi-user multi-tasking machines, and software written for any of the models will work on all.

AT&T MICROS: While the 3B series will be sold only to telecommunications companies, a rumored "personal" micro will be sold on a retail basis. Based on either the Bellmac or WE32100 processor, it is expected to be a UNIX machine. The WE32100 is a 32-bit chip based on CMOS technology, with a built-in 2K of cache memory. Use of CMOS will greatly reduce power requirements, while the cache memory will make the chip VERY fast.

ATARI CHANGES: In an attempt to become profitable Atari has cut its APX software publishing program. It is also considering buying graphics technology from Amiga. Amiga, formed by a bunch of ex-Atari engineers, has developed a still unreleased 68000 machine with stunning graphics.

IBM POPCORN: This unannounced machine will use Intel's 80286 processor, and cost somewhere between \$6000-15,000. A multi-user machine, it will use MSDOS 3.0 or Xenix, have better graphics than the PC, and be aimed directly at corporate users. It will also contain a large capacity copyrighted ROM in an attempt to lock out foreign peripheral and "clone" manufacturers. (IBM's recent court cases against PC clones have apparently been inspired by a desire to lock such machines out of IBM's local area network equipment.)

PCjr AND GAMES: Some game manufacturers, preferring PCjr graphics to regular PC graphics, are considering producing a PCjr emulator card for the IBM PC. The card would accept program cartridges (which are much harder to pirate).

PCjr SALES POOR: While no one has sent any units back yet, dealers are selling fewer than half the PCjrs they expected. Customers are apparently expecting \$3500 IBM PC's for the price of a \$700 PCjr. Buyers also hate the keyboard, and are disappointed the machine cannot use copy-protected or large memory programs.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND: Asked how PCjr sales were going, considering the poor keyboard and limit of one disk drive, and IBM spokesman replied, "Sales are meeting our demand." So that's how they do it --

PORTABLE APPLE II: On April 24 Apple will announce the Apple IIC, priced at \$999. It will have 128K, an 80 column card, mouse, and serial/parallel ports. Software developers who are using the machine don't like the keyboard but claim it is much better than the IBM PCjr.

APPLE SCANDAL: Just before Apple announced it would have "flat profits" last year, Steve Jobs, Apple Chairman, sold 500,000 shares for \$25 million, and A.C. Markkula, Vice Chairman, sold 780,000 shares for \$27.5 million. Both are being sued by stockholders, and the SEC is rumored to be investigating.

APPLE II ProDOS: The February Byte has a nice article on Apple's new ProDOS for the Apple II. (Your newsletter editor, notorious for hating Apple DOS 3.2 and 3.3, played with a beta-test version of ProDOS last year, and thinks it is GREAT. Unfortunately for some club members, Steve Wozniak, creator of the Apple II, claims ProDOS will not work on fake Apples. "Try it and your CPU will dissolve," he jokes. He is joking, isn't he?)

HOW TO BUY FAKES: InfoWorld has carried many articles detailing the damage caused by pirated computers and software. In the March 12, 1984 issue (pp. 80-81) they took a new approach by providing detailed directions on how to find the Hong Kong computer black market shops.

STEVE JOBS AND NEC: While touring Japan in late 1983, theoretically to promote Apple, Jobs lectured Japanese executives and engineers, telling them they were nothing but imitators, lacking in originality, were afraid of real competition, and were inflexible. (Jobs, incidentally, dropped out of college and has never designed a single hardware or software product. He gained his wealth and position solely because he was Steve Wozniak's best friend.) While visiting an NEC plant, NEC engineers proudly showed Jobs a spectacular machine, still unannounced, which does everything the Macintosh does -- only faster and in color. Jobs, furious, cancelled the rest of his tour and left the country.

MAC NAME: The Macintosh was originally named after the apple, McIntosh. Original users couldn't spell this properly, so --

MORE MAC: It takes a minimum of eight disk swaps to back up a Macintosh disk, making two disk drives all but essential. Unfortunately, Apple decided late last year to drop plans for a second built-in drive in order to boost sales of add-on devices. Worse yet, Apple has been using all the drives it gets to build new Macs -- you might desperately need a second drive, but you can't buy one. Apple has no idea when things will get straightened out.

HIGH TECH AND WALL STREET: Investors depend on the Wall Street Journal for computer news and analysis -- but the Journal depends on manual typewriters and similar equipment. As an experiment 75 Radio Shack Model 100 notebook computers were purchased last year -- and staffers started fighting over who could use the machines. As a result the Journal has purchased more Model 100s and is planning to install \$8 million in additional computer equipment in the next six months.

COMMODORE: Several announcements have come out of Commodore in the past few months, and none have proven to be true. The latest announcements: Commodore will introduce a Z-8000 based machine in May. It will have 256K, a UNIX-like operating system, and one or two built-in floppy disk drives. In addition, Commodore has purchased a license to manufacture Bytec's superb Hyperion portable computer, as well as a license to manufacture Intel's 8088 processor.

CANON LASER: Canon U.S.A. is selling, to manufacturers only, an 8 page a minute laser printer mechanism. In addition to being fast, the machine also has excellent black and white graphics, and uses a simple cartridge mechanism for ink and toner. When sold as a finished product it could retail for \$3000-5000. Radio Shack is said to be considering the printer, but is concerned it will not be able to get enough units (Radio Shack's minimum product stocking level is 70,000 units per year). Apple is also considering the machine for the Macintosh and Lisa 2, but wants to sell it for \$2000 more than Radio Shack.

COLECO PROBLEMS: The last issue of this newsletter said Coleco produced 115,000 Adams in 1983. Coleco has lowered this figure to 95,000 (from their original goal of 500,000) and also reported that, in spite of the fantastic success of its Cabbage Patch dolls, it still lost lots of money -- because of the Adam.

LOTUS NEWS: Lotus has introduced Symphony for the IBM PC, a \$695 package integrating word processing, communications, graphics, spreadsheets, data base management, and windows. It requires one 320K floppy (two recommended) and 640K of RAM. (Note: many older IBM PC's, based on 8K chips, cannot expand to 640K.) The word processor is similar to Wang word processors, the spreadsheet offers 8,192 rows by 256 columns, and the data base manager is "forms" based (draw the forms and Symphony figures out what to do with the data). Lotus is also rumored to be developing a notebook computer designed to do nothing but run Lotus 1-2-3.

INTEL AT CAPACITY: Intel's President has stated the company is overcommitted for its products in 1984, so many chips (such as the 8088 and 80186) will be rationed. "We're going to catch up at the next recession. We'll be in precise supply and demand for about 35 seconds."

HP PRINTER: Hewlett Packard has introduced the "Thinkjet" portable printer for \$495. The black and white, 150 cps, 5 pound machine uses ink-jet technology and, in a break with past practice, will include a Centronics interface as well as HP interfaces. HP is working on a color version.

KAYPRO & MITSUI: Kaypro will introduce late this summer an "ultra portable" notebook computer developed by Mitsui. It will cost around \$2500, and will feature IBM PC compatibility. Kaypro claims the machine was designed by the same person who designed Radio Shack's Model 100.

Newsletter Notes

NAME WANTED: This newsletter started as nothing more than a question: "why don't we have a newsletter?" Now in its fourth issue, it needs a name, and YCC News sounds too much like "Yuck News." It would also be nice if someone with a graphics printer could draw a nice logo --

CONTRIBUTE FOR FREE: You can now send your contributions to the club newsletter by mail for free. Send a letter, listing, or disk (anything up to 12 oz.) to:

L.I. Charters

USNH Box 65-1561

FPO 98765

Write, in the upper right hand corner, "MPS," and put your FULL return address on the envelope. You can also call the editor at 0468-48-7405 (evenings).

WHAT TO CONTRIBUTE: Any item of information or gossip concerning microcomputers or information management; how-to articles; hints, suggestions, and discoveries; reviews and tutorials; program listings (short enough to fit on one page); and want ads. Want ads should include name, address, and a reasonable length description of the item being sought or sold.

FORMATS ACCEPTED: Newsletter contributions can consist of printed copy, ready for photocopying, or of disk files. Disk files should be in ASCII on soft-sectored single-sided 5.25" diskettes using any of the following formats: Access; DEC VT 180; Epson QX-10; Heath/Zenith Z-89 or 90; HP-125; IBM CP/M-86 or PC DOS; Kaypro II; Morrow; NEC PC-8000; Osborne; Otrona; Sanyo 1100; Superbrain; Televideo; TRS-80 Model I, III, or 4; and Xerox 820 or 820 II. (If you don't know how to produce an ASCII file or a single-sided diskette, please write or call the editor.) The editor would particularly like to see some H/Z-100 and Kaypro II disks to see if his spiffy format conversion program really works. All disks will be returned at the next scheduled club meeting, or mailed back if you are really impatient.

Hints

MODEL 100 AND OSBORNE: After much experimentation, your newsletter editor has discovered it isn't necessary to use a modem eliminator when connecting a Model 100 to an Osborne-1; a standard RS-232 cable is all that is required. He also discovered MODEM7, the well-respected public-domain terminal program for CP/M machines, can't be used for file transfers to or from a Model 100 (MODEM7 expects both machines to use MODEM7).

Want Ads

WANTED: Cray-1S, any condition. Will pay up to \$1000. L. Charters, USNH Box 65-1561, FPO 98765.

WANTED: CP/M file transfer program that can work with the Model 100. Address same as above.